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SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

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April 2, 2009

Greetings to the Dialogue Institute!

It gives me great pleasure to write on behalf of the Equality Unit of the Scottish Government with warm wishes for Professor Leonard Swidler for the upcoming event where people from around the world are gathering this April 26, 2009 to honor both the 'man and his work'.

Professor Swidler has been an inspiration to those working in the field of inter-religious studies and inter-faith dialogue and action for decades. His academic programs, extensive publications and establishment of the Dialogue Institute at Philadelphia are among his many achievements. His mentoring of students and fellow professionals has been exemplary.

The Dialogue Institute was instrumental in facilitating the Fulbright Interfaith Community Action Programs. As a European representative, I was privileged to be part of the first Interfaith Fulbright delegation and to have subsequently worked with Prof. Swidler and Dr. Weiman in Scotland on SAFE (Scotland America Faith Exchange), which was an outgrowth of the Fulbright Program. Many youth organizations and communities reaped countless rewards from their visit, including Prof. Swidler's "Reflections" before the Scottish Parliament. In particular, the presentations and the collaborative partnership with the Glasgow University Centre for Inter Faith Studies were of great benefit, and faculty and graduate students, as well as community leaders, were greatly appreciative and inspired. On-going collaborative exchanges are envisioned and planned together – continuing the work that Professor Swidler inspired.

It is the Scottish Government's desire to work in partnership with global leaders such as Professor Swidler, and to take forward the important work of interfaith dialogue and action. It is our hope that through working at an international level Scotland can continue to be at the forefront of interfaith development.

It is a privilege to have hosted Prof. Swidler and Dr. Weiman in Scotland. We wish him personally continued success as you gather to celebrate his achievements, and look forward to on-going collaborative engagement with the Dialogue Institute in the future.

With heartfelt greetings,

Maureen Sier, PhD
Scottish Government Equality Unit